

Francis D. Perry House (Trinity Church Rectory)
678 Pequot Road
Southport
Fairfield County
Connecticut

HABS No. CONN-317

HABS
CONN.
1-SOUPD,
26-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. CONN-317

FRANCIS D. PERRY HOUSE
(Trinity Church Rectory)

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CONN
1-500 PO,
26-

Location: 678 Pequot Road (north side of street), Southport,
Fairfield County, Connecticut.

USGS Westport Quadrangle Map; Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 18.643610.4554780.

Present Owner
and Occupant: Trinity Episcopal Church.

Present Use: Residence of Rector of Trinity Church.

Statement of
Significance: The Francis D. Perry house was erected in 1832, and is one of two Greek Revival style structures in Southport which was designed with a five-columned front portico. The other, the Henry Perry House, 45 Westway Road (Conn-305), was his brother's and also erected in 1832. It is quite possible that they were designed or built by the same person. In keeping with high-style American architecture of this period, this wooden classical temple is a translation of the prototypical stone temple of Europe. Francis Perry was a prominent banker in Southport, and a devoted member of the Trinity Parish. After his wife's death in 1893, the Perrys gave their residence to Trinity to be used as the Rector's residence.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1832.
2. Original and subsequent owners: Reference to the chain of title to the land upon which the structure stands is in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds and Probate Court Records, Fairfield Town Hall, Fairfield, Connecticut.

1832 Deed, July 18, 1832, recorded in Volume 43, page 256.
Stephen Osborne to Francis D. Perry.

1884 Will, April 16, 1884, Francis D. Perry to his wife Ann Eliza Perry.

1893 Will, April 21, 1893, Ann Eliza Perry to Trinity Episcopal Church.

3. Alterations and additions: The Southport "Chronicle" reported on June 11, 1891 that "Mrs. Francis Perry is having her house re-shingled."

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Francis D. Perry was born in Southport on October 2, 1809. He was the son of Miah Perry and grandson of Peter Perry, one of the village's early large land-owners. In addition to inheriting some of his father's wealth, Perry was president of Southport National Bank, and Secretary-Treasurer and Trustee of Southport Savings Bank. He was a devoted member of Trinity Church throughout his life. Upon Mrs. Perry's death in 1893, the Perrys gave their residence to the church to be used as the parish rectory.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: None.

2. Bibliography:

- a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Fairfield County Deed Records, Office of the Recorder,
Fairfield Town Hall, Fairfield, Connecticut.

Fairfield County Probate Records, Probate Court,
Fairfield Town Hall, Fairfield, Connecticut.

- b. Secondary and published sources:

1. Guilbart, Rev. Edmund. Annals of an Old Parish: Historical Sketches of Trinity Church, Southport, Connecticut, 1725-1898. New York; Thomas Whittaker, 1898.
 2. Hurd, D. Hamilton, compiler. History of Fairfield County Connecticut. Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis & Co., 1881.
 3. Southport "Chronicle," June 11, 1891.

Prepared by Jan E. Cigliano
Staff Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
December 1978

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Francis D. Perry house, built 1832, is one of two Greek Revival style structures in Southport which was designed with a five-columned front portico. In keeping with American vernacular architecture of the period, this wooden classical temple is an excellent translation of the prototypical stone temples of Europe. The purely articulated detail of the Ionic order and entablature and Palladian window in the gable pediment are patterned after the designs of prominent American high-style architects of the classical era.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Two stories with attic and partially exposed basement. The structure is rectangular with a rear ell addition, and measures 32'-4" (four-bay front) x 48'-3".
2. Foundations: Rubble masonry construction, 18" thick.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Flush butt-boardings on front (south) facade; clapboarding on all other facades. The structure is painted a uniform white.
4. Structural system, framing: Mortise-and-tenon timber frame construction.
5. Porches, porticos: Wooden, two-story portico on front (south) facade. Five fluted Ionic columns support a rather simple architrave and denticulated cornice. Five pilasters, identical in design to the columns, define the four bays of the facade. There are two stoops on the northeast elevation of the rear ell and one on the northwest elevation.

6. Chimneys: Two brick chimneys pierce the ridge at equal intervals of the main section. A smaller brick chimney is at the rear of the ell's roof.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The front(south) main entry door is flanked by side-lights and a leaded-glass transom. A plain cornice crowns the doorway.
 - b. Windows: Floor length windows on front (south) facade's first level with two-over-two light double-hung sash windows are on the second level. All openings have wooden sills and projecting architraves overhead.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gabled roof with modern asphalt shingles.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: The main block is articulated with a delicate Ionic cornice. A Palladian window with classical details ornaments the center of the gable pediment.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
 - a. First floor: The front stairhall/foyer opens into the front and rear parlors through doors in the west wall, and dining room in the north wall. Double doors in the rear parlor's north wall open into the rear ell addition. The "L" section consists of kitchen, work-room and den/study.
 - b. Second floor: The second floor extends over the main block and is partitioned into four corner rooms - a stairhall and three bedrooms.
2. Stairways: The main stairway in the front entry foyer is open and curving. The stairs have an 11-inch rise and 8-inch run. Newel post and balusters are turned. There is a straight stairway in the rear addition.
3. Flooring: Two-inch wide oak boards.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster over all wall and ceiling surfaces, except for the back parlor which has a stamped sheet metal covering. A decorative plaster rosette is in the center of the stair hall ceiling.
5. Doorways and doors: Original panelled doors with original hardware are in place. Doorways are framed with fillet molding and carved corner blocks of deeply cut rosettes.
6. Special decorative features: Front and rear parlors have matching slate fireplaces with Tudor arched openings and elaborate cast-iron fire boxes.
7. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: Central heating.
 - b. Lighting: Electrical fixtures throughout.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The structure faces south-southwest and sits on a level plot, thirty feet back from the street.
2. Outbuildings: A large garage is at the rear of the property.

Prepared by D. T. VanZanten
Team Architect
Historic American
Buildings Survey
September 1966

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Southport Historic District Commission, several members of whom provided the necessary funds. The project was completed in the summer of 1966 under the general direction of James C. Massey, then the Chief of HABS; Ralph Schwarz of the Ford Foundation; and Architect John C. Waite (Columbia University); with assistant architects Christopher Benninger (Harvard University), Richard Haines (University of Kentucky), and Andrew Craig Morrison (University of Michigan), and architectural historian David T. VanZanten (Harvard University), at the HABS Field Office in Southport, Connecticut. The data was prepared and edited in HABS Washington office in December 1978 by Jan E. Cigliano, staff historian. Photographs were taken by HABS staff photographer Jack E. Boucher in September 1966.